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158

## FREELANCE IN RUSSIA AND ITS PRIORITY DIRECTIONS

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## ФРИЛАНС В РОССИИ И ЕГО ПРИОРИТЕТНЫЕ НАПРАВЛЕНИЯ

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***Аннотация.** В статье рассматриваются некоторые вопросы истории возникновения и популярности фриланса в России. Статистическими методами определены его основные направления. Выявлены плюсы и минусы работы фрилансером. Рассмотрены основные платформы для фриланса в России.*

**Introduction.** It is said that soon traditional forms of employment will disappear. New technologies, new companies and new means of communication are changing the labor market. Nowadays it is a common practice to buy or sell things on eBay, rent out a room on Airbnb and take a fellow traveler for a trip using BlaBlaCar. Today all these things have become a one-day task.

Economists call this trend “gig economy”. It means that the main or additional income comes from the sale of individual goods or services via the Internet. Freelancers are the most typical representatives of this new labor market. The term “freelancer” was originally used by Walter Scott in the novel “Ivanhoe” to describe a “medieval mercenary warrior” [1].

The word “freelance” comes from English: “free” and “lance”, indicating that the lance is not sworn to any lord’s services. Being a freelancer means that you are self-employed. You can choose who you work for, when you work and how often you work. Freelancing is a unique work style and it can become the first step towards running your own business.

Thus, the purpose of our work is to consider the topicality of freelancing in today’s Russia and its most popular directions.

**Research and results.** At present the most popular freelance sites in Russia are FL.ru, Freelance.ru and Weblancer.net. In our paper we study FL.ru because it gives open-source statistics on the number of current services on the site.

Every day FL.ru publishes up to fifteen hundred new offers. In February 2016, the total number of projects on the exchange was 38 thousand [Fig. 1] and in February 2017 this number increased by almost two times. The details are shown in Fig. 1 below:

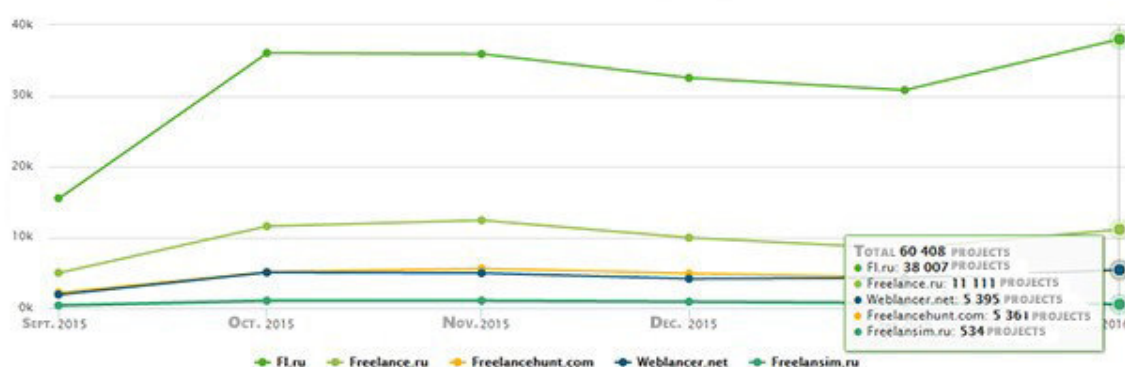


Fig. 1. The number of projects in the freelance market in February 2016

The site gives 20 main directions where freelancers find work. We reviewed the number of services in each direction within a month. Then we ranked sorted these directions in descending order and presented the data in the table [Table 1].

Table 1

*Average number of services*

Service	Number of offers
Website Design and Development	12201
Design and Art	11170
Advertising and Marketing	7023
Texts / Word processing	6514
Outsourcing and Consulting	4696
Audio / Video	4010
Engineering	3989
Programming	3437
Photography	3389
Optimization (SEO)	3230
Architecture / Interior	2302
Translation	2110
3D Graphics	1575
Training and Consultations	1484
Printing Trades	1160
Networks and Information Systems	819
Management	674
Animation	519
Mobile Applications	517
Game Development	283

Table 1 shows that website design and development, design and art, advertising and marketing and texts/word processing are among leaders in popularity. Approximately the same data is calculated by freelance sites. Most demanded specialists in FreelanceHunt exchange are website programmers (36%) and copywriters. The demand for the work with texts/word processing is 19.8% and the demand for designers is 19.5% [2].

As a rule for Russian freelancers, remote work is not the main employment or source of income. Among the users of FL.ru, 45% have a permanent place of work, 18% are university students, 9% are independent entrepreneurs and 5% are housewives [3].

The proportion of freelancers in the market is constantly growing. The number of newly registered employers and their offers grows by 10-15% per year. Thus, the competition between freelancers increases. But along with this, the number of private clients is rather small as to other countries. It is a consequence of the economic situation in Russia. Unfortunately, old manufactures or budget injections are still the main source of money in Russian economy. Due to the crisis, people continue losing jobs and freelance is one of the ways to solve the problem of unemployment [4].

**Conclusion.** Undoubtedly, freelance occupies its niche in Russia and every year the number of people who work remotely increases. Nowadays web sites and art, design and marketing are gaining popularity. Official statistics state that in our country there are about 200,000 freelancers and it is 0.3% of all working Russians [5]. According to the US Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, about 10.3 (7.4%) million workers in the US are independent contractors, i.e. freelancers [6].

With the help of modern technologies, people have an additional opportunity to work for themselves without leaving their homes. The main advantages of being a freelancer are flexible working hours and work arrangements, variety and higher income. However, there are also disadvantages of freelancing. You have unstable workload, lots of legwork and inconsistent cash flow. You have to pay taxes independently. Furthermore, additional efforts are required for self-motivation and time management [7].

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